

**The Dramatic Prologues of Alexander Nowell:
Accommodating the Classics at 1540s Westminster**

Micha Lazarus

Trinity College

Cambridge, CB2 1TQ

email: mdsl3@cam.ac.uk

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The Dramatic Prologues of Alexander Nowell: Accommodating the Classics at 1540s Westminster

Alexander Nowell, headmaster of Westminster, left a rough manuscript notebook that contains Latin prose prologues to three classical plays performed by his pupils at Westminster in the 1540s: Terence's *Adelphoe* and *Eunuchus*, and Seneca's *Hippolytus*. These prologues, a substantial new source in Reformation criticism, are transcribed and translated in full here for the first time, and placed in their historical, literary, and intellectual context. Prefacing Terence's comedies, Nowell produces a learned and charismatic address in the Erasmian mode, drawing together a range of pragmatic and theoretical defences of comedy and a robust notion of fictionality remarkable at this early date. His treatment of Seneca's *Hippolytus* is quite different: Nowell draws a detailed and unusual parallel between the classical myth and the scriptural story of Genesis that relates him closely to contemporary developments in Reformation neo-classicism in Germany and the Low Countries. These multi-faceted orations paint a complex picture of pedagogy, bureaucratic necessity, and literary thought in the early morning of the English Reformation.¹

The rough notebook of Alexander Nowell – headmaster of Westminster, Dean of St Paul's, author of the Elizabethan catechism, pioneering Greek instructor, noted angler, and inventor of bottled beer – contains three Latin prose prologues to his boys' performances of Terence's *Adelphoe* and *Eunuchus*, and Seneca's *Hippolytus*, at Westminster in the 1540s.² Transcribed and translated in full here for the first time, these documents of early drama and classical reception in England are striking on at least three counts. First: though we have many tracts written by sixteenth-century teachers and educational theorists about how one *should*

accommodate pagan materials to Christian students and audiences, Nowell's prologues are among precious few examples of what actually *was* said to those students and audiences. Second: these prologues comprise some of the earliest, and certainly the most articulate, evidence we have of school drama as a regular, institutional event in England; they are coterminous with the great flourishing of school drama in Germany and the Low Countries, and may even emerge from the same intellectual circles. Third: Nowell's prologue to Seneca's *Hippolytus* is the earliest evidence of a performance of a classical tragedy anywhere in England. This essay will discuss the date, circumstances, content, and sources of Nowell's prologues, and publish the texts with facing-page translation.

I. The Manuscript and its Rediscovery

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Brasenose College 31 is a small volume of fifty-three leaves, thirty-five of which bear Alexander Nowell's rough accounts, draft letters, and booklists; the three prologues discussed here occupy five folios, ff.26^r-30^v.³ The manuscript remains uncatalogued, though this has been somewhat remedied of late by a short notice in *Records of Early English Drama*.⁴ It was purchased by Brasenose College in the Dawson-Turner sale in 1859, too late to be included in H. O. Coxe's description of the college's manuscripts in 1849, and as a loan-deposit since 1891 it did not qualify for description in the Bodleian's own catalogues beyond a handwritten summary by Falconer Madan, Bodley's librarian at the time.⁵

Nowell's notebook was therefore unknown to early historians of Westminster. When it did come to light, it clarified confusion over the genesis of Westminster's Latin play, an annual

performance recorded continuously from 1560 well into the twentieth century.⁶ Nowell himself recalled in 1567, twelve years after he vacated the headmastership, that he had read Terence ‘unto children in the Grammer schoole’, and the passage was noted by his eighteenth-century biographer, John Strype. Without further evidence, however, historians of Westminster and of school drama were in agreement that this suggested only ‘performances *like* the Westminster Play’: the play proper, they thought, was only established by the school’s Elizabethan statutes of 1560.⁷ Yet the notebook provided unambiguous proof of pre-Elizabethan dramatic activity. Lawrence Tanner’s *Westminster School* (1934) was the first history to recognise that Nowell had indeed founded, *de facto*, the Latin play, and the manuscript was subsequently discussed at length by T. W. Baldwin in his classic work on Tudor education, *William Shakspeare’s Small Latine & Lesse Greeke* (1944).⁸ For Tanner and Baldwin, Nowell’s notebook was of primary interest for the light it could shed on the earliest period of education at Westminster: lists of books, student accounts, and draft-notes of school business offered rare insight into the mechanics of a Tudor curriculum. Only at the end of his account did Baldwin remark that the three prologues, ‘as the earliest to survive of their type for English grammar schools, ought to be edited and made accessible’.⁹

Baldwin’s plea was answered in part in 1988 by Bruce R. Smith, whose *Ancient Scripts & Modern Experience on the English Stage* introduced Nowell’s prologues to literary scholarship and declared his production of *Hippolytus* ‘the first recorded performance of a classical tragedy in England’.¹⁰ Smith transcribed and translated two chunks of the texts, the first a long paragraph on comedy from the prologue to *Eunuchus*, and the second, shorter, from that to *Hippolytus*. The transcriptions are mostly accurate, but Smith’s selections and the uses to which he puts them flatten Nowell’s multi-faceted text. For Smith, Nowell’s prologues amount

to mere Reformation pietism, one of many ‘heavy-handed attempts to hammer out ethical irregularities into dogmatic certainties’ by turning Terence’s transgressive comedy into a ‘modern morality play’ and neither asking nor answering the ‘genuinely tragic questions’ posed by *Hippolytus*.¹¹

Smith is of course right to identify a strong moral strain in Nowell’s remarks. Yet after much new work on school and university drama, on Renaissance poetics, and on neo-Latin literature, we may find these prologues all the more intriguing for their historical difference, and ask more curiously just *how* Nowell goes about accommodating his classical *exempla* to Christian morality.¹² Strategies of safe reading are, after all, one of the richest seams in the story of classical reception, from Plato and Plutarch, through Basil, Augustine, and other Church Fathers, to medieval moralisations and the sweeping Aristotelian defences of Renaissance poetics. Nowell’s remarks both draw on and contribute to this field. Moreover, the occasion of Nowell’s compositions, to which Smith paid little attention, suggests canny accommodations of a different kind, of a royally-appointed headmaster navigating competing claims of profit and pleasure, ecclesiastical bureaucracy and good pedagogy, the integrity of the classics and impressionable young minds. Nowell is no dogmatic pietist: he is a representative both of and to the state, advancing a sophisticated argument for the preservation of classical literature in a turbulent age quick to censure.

II. Nowell’s Moment: Dates and Circumstances

Alexander Nowell was probably born around 1516, in Lancashire. At the age of thirteen he went up to Brasenose College, Oxford, where he studied for the next dozen years, apparently sharing rooms with John Foxe. He proceeded B.A. in 1536 and was elected Fellow of the college in the same year; the degree of M.A. followed in 1540, after which he studied logic in Cambridge for a while before returning to Oxford to lecture on it in 1541/2. He was appointed schoolmaster at Westminster in late March, 1541, and held the post until 1554 before fleeing the country a year later under Marian persecution.¹³ On his return in 1560, shortly after Elizabeth's accession, he was appointed Dean of St Paul's and composed the *Catechism* that became standard in Elizabethan schools; he died in 1602, an old man in his eighties.

Nowell's notebook begins at Brasenose in the 1530s – the earliest dated item in the manuscript is a letter of 1535 – and records the minutiae of his personal and professional life for the next two decades. We see him taking inventories of his books as he lends them to his brothers, Laurence and Robert, and a wide circle of Oxford friends. We see the excitement with which he greeted his appointment at Westminster in a draft letter to Laurence, explaining that he can't visit their parents as planned because 'everything has changed for me. Look at what has happened! I have been placed in charge of the magnificent grammar school of Westminster, which the most illustrious King has founded!' (f.38^v).¹⁴ Euphoric, he updated his stationery: a list of 'bookes delyuered to *Master* Nowell off BC' is corrected to '~~off BC~~ scholemaster off Westm.' (f.37^v). Once he reaches Westminster, we see him engaging in school administration, keeping accounts for the boys, arranging their board and laundry, and procuring textbooks and innumerable pairs of shoes on their behalf (one William Bowyer, a distinguished antiquarian in later life, wore through a pair of shoes about every two months at eight pence a pair [ff.32^{r-v}]). Two of his students are recommended to John Christopherson, one of the founding fellows of

Trinity College, Cambridge, in a letter which the boys' arrival at Trinity enables us to date around 1545-1546; Nowell takes the opportunity to send regards to his and Christopherson's mutual friend John Redman (ff.36^{r-v}). We see the royal connections of his post: a draft letter to Henry VIII begs remission from the headmastership on account of recurrent 'ferocious headaches' that leave him 'somewhat deaf, and little capable of sight' (ff.24^v-25^v);¹⁵ verses beneath the text on the final page of the *Hippolytus* prologue are clearly composed for a coronation portrait of Edward VI, and so can be dated quite precisely to February 1547, since they stress that it 'is' Edward who 'now' holds the sceptre of Britain (f.28^v).¹⁶ We see him engaging the world of London publishing with verses in praise of the printer Reynier Wolfe (ff.48^v-49^v), which later appeared in Wolfe's printing of Robert Estienne's *Dictionariolum puerorum* (London, 1552); that same year, we see him drafting a circular letter requesting support for the family of Odnell Hebborne, his undermaster at Westminster, who had fallen gravely ill and would die in December (ff.21^v-22^r). The latest datable item in the manuscript is a draft epitaph for Christopherson, who died in 1558, testament to a scholarly friendship between the evangelical exile and Mary's Catholic Master of Trinity that had survived the bloodiest of religious schisms (f.23^r).¹⁷

Most of the datable Westminster accounts in Nowell's notebook fall in the mid-1540s, and there is further evidence to place the prologues, and hence the boys' performances, in that period. The foundations were laid by Baldwin, who recognised that the verses on Edward VI's coronation must place the Christmas performance of *Hippolytus* in or before 1546. He also noted that the prologue to *Adelphoe* refers to a similar occasion 'last year', and therefore conjectured an unrecorded performance in Christmas 1544, placing *Adelphoe* in 1545, *Hippolytus* in 1546, and *Eunuchus* at some point thereafter.¹⁸ Baldwin's belief that the prologues' disposition in the

manuscript was a guide to their chronology, however, was misplaced. The order in which the prologues appear in the manuscript is (1) *Adelphoe*, (2) *Hippolytus*, and (3) *Eunuchus*. But as the volume is currently organised, Christopherson dies thirteen folios before he serves on admissions, Nowell begs excusal from his post fourteen folios before being appointed to it, and two events datable to 1552 occur twenty-seven folios apart. That is to say, the notebook has been rebound and no longer records the order of performance, if indeed it ever did; it may originally have been no more than loose papers.¹⁹ Secondly, the full text of the *Eunuchus* prologue contains clear evidence that it, and not an unrecorded performance, came first. Nowell's reference in the *Adelphoe* prologue to an earlier performance – 'enough and more than enough has been said about [the profit of performing comedies] by us last year' (I.23-5) – already seems to glance at the *Eunuchus* prologue, since enough and more than enough is indeed said therein on that subject. This is confirmed at two points in the *Eunuchus* prologue itself: Nowell notes the prestige the distinguished spectators lend to these 'first attempts of boys' plays' ('*puerilium ludicorum prima tyrocinia*', III.22-3), and concludes, via the Erasmian adage 'let a beginner off lightly', by begging their indulgence because 'not one of us has appeared on stage before this day' ('*nemo vero nostrum ante hunc diem in scenam prodijt*', III.109-10). The text alone does not make clear whether 'prima tyrocinia' indicates that *Eunuchus* was the 'first' Westminster play outright, or merely the first performance of this particular company of boys. Yet the school context collapses this distinction: given that boys attended Westminster over a number of years, it is highly unlikely that Nowell could claim it was *every* boy's début in any year after the very first. The internal evidence, therefore, places *Eunuchus* first, *Adelphoe* a year later, and *Hippolytus* after that. Since the *Hippolytus* prologue must have taken place in 1546 or before, we can deduce that these annual Christmas performances occurred in this order between 1541 and

1546, and moreover that the two comedies, at least, appeared in consecutive years during this period.²⁰ Without further evidence we cannot fix the chronology more precisely within these parameters. Nowell could well have begun producing plays the moment he arrived in post, by analogy to cases such as Thomas Ashton's, who later in the century was asked to direct the boys in a *Passion* play at Shrewsbury the year before he was installed headmaster: in such instances schoolmasters seem to have been appointed with explicit view to their ability to produce entertainments.²¹

In the labile political and religious atmosphere of the early 1540s, such productions can only have been subject to heightened scrutiny.²² The evangelical triumphalism of the 1530s had been rocked by the arrest and execution of Thomas Cromwell in July, 1540, yet the King's return to conservatism was sparingly imposed and reform proceeded nonetheless. Westminster, having been seized by the Crown in January, was refounded as a cathedral by the end of the year in the same burst of royal investment that established reformed cathedral priories across the country, as well as Christ Church at Oxford and Trinity at Cambridge, to which Westminster had close financial and scholarly ties.²³ Reform of the arts proceeded as well: Nowell's appointment in March, 1541, closely coincided with a proclamation drafted by Thomas Cranmer in July abolishing the customary election of boy bishops. His plays at Westminster may even, in some sense, have been the new, sanctioned form of such discontinued mid-winter festivals.²⁴ Yet only two years later conservative reaction would culminate in the *Act for the Advancement of True Religion* of 1543. Though primarily directed towards the suppression of heresy and restriction of access to the English bible, the Act was also concerned with the problem of licentious entertainments:

His Majestie ... thinketh, that it is and shalbe moste requysite expedient and necessarye ... to take awaie purge and clense this his Highnes realm ... of all suche bokes wrytinges sermons disputacions argumentes balades playes rymes songes teachinges and instruccions, as be pestiferous and noyssoome ...

Provided allwayes ... that it shalbe lawfull to all and everye persone and persones to set foorth the songes plaies and enterludes, to be used and exercysed ... for the rebuking and reproching of vices, and the setting foorth of vertue; so allwaies the saide songes plaies or enterludes meddle not with interpretations of scripture...²⁵

Terence and Seneca were by no means the intended targets of this 'purge'. An example of the kind of entertainment that was, an anti-Catholic play entitled *Pammachius*, earned official rebuke after being performed at Christ's College, Cambridge, on 16 January 1545; the Christ's fellow who lodged the complaint described it as 'pestiferous', recalling the language of Henry's act just as Nowell does when he describes the vices portrayed in Terence's *Eunuchus* as 'pestifera' (III.65). But in this period the political ground was shifting unpredictably, and education, in particular, 'the true remedie of all evils', was caught between its critical importance to conservative and reformist ambitions alike, and an official policy concerned in these years with curbing extreme opinions and enforcing obedient unity above all.²⁶ In the 1540s, and at a royal foundation engaged (as Nowell puts it in his letter to Henry) in 'forming the minds of those by whose authority and prudence this country may in time be governed', and most of all at one whose physical proximity to the court nurtured unusual dependence, the stakes for justifying plays – for demonstrating that a play 'meddled not with interpretations of scripture' – were suddenly very high.²⁷

Producing those plays was, nevertheless, an expectation of the office. The appointment of a boy bishop over the winter dated at Westminster from at least the late fourteenth century and remained an ‘annual custom’ into Henry’s reign; there is record of payment to the Sub-Almoner in 1521 of ‘xvid. for wryting of a play for the chyldren’.²⁸ In the Terence prologues Nowell refers to the plays as ‘honorary duties’, addressed to those ‘whom that truly royal prudence has placed in charge of us and our teachers’ (I.31, 38-40). He urges the audience to ‘place the most important and serious matters aside’ (III.11-12); they are ‘the most distinguished men, situated at the helm of the most important affairs’ (III.21-2). It is uncertain precisely who attended the performances, but the terms of his address suggest it was the school’s governors, the dean and chapter of Westminster, who were indeed ‘in charge of’ appointments to minor offices, including scholarships to the grammar school: of the forty scholars provided for on the royal foundation, the dean was to appoint four scholars, the canons three each.²⁹ This was an audience both *doctus* and *eruditus*, as was stipulated by royal statute: Westminster’s early administration boasted sixteen doctors of divinity, four of law, nine bachelors of divinity, one bachelor of both laws, and four MAs.³⁰ But Nowell’s explicit address to school governance need not imply that parents and the wider community were not also present. There is plenty of evidence from later in the century that provincial schools supplied festive dramatic entertainments for their broader communities, at first alongside and later in place of guild productions, and the *Consuetudinarium*, or custom-book, of William Malim, headmaster of Eton, speaks of such plays as being performed ‘with a public audience watching’ (‘populo spectante publice’).³¹ Nowell himself refers to recent performances the boys have prepared ‘more suitable for the senses of common folk’, since their coarse jokes and overacting have little educational value (III.76-87).³² And of course the boys themselves were an audience for the prologues, as we can hear in Nowell’s tone of proxy

address: his orations perform for his adult audience the kind of responsible pedagogical message he can be trusted to instil in their scholars, and at the same time give the children a model defence of classical literature in the reformed state.³³

III. The Prologues and their Sources

The first of Nowell's comic prologues, on Terence's *Adelphoe*, is short and pro-forma. He praises the play for its diverse examples and maxims, and Terence for his observance of *decorum*, which he glosses with the Greek 'τὸ πρέπον'. Nowell does no more than gesture toward the profit of performing comedies, since he has said enough on the subject the previous year, and his audience is already convinced. He begs approval from the audience, and their indulgence for the fact that youths will be acting the parts of old people – perhaps looking back to his earlier praise of *decorum* – before making way for the boys.

The playful delivery of a great pedagogue can be overheard around line 30: 'I won't mention the fact that we have been summoned by certain among you to these honorary duties', he says, so the boys won't be cowed in their performance – hamming it up to defuse any genuine trepidation (I.30-32). The tone persists in the prologue to Terence's *Eunuchus*, where Nowell speaks of the pleasure the spectators will take from the performance: 'I won't mention what kind of men you are', he says flirtatiously, or perhaps 'I won't mention *which* of you' (III.9). But the *Eunuchus* prologue is overall a far more extensive and explicit document: here Nowell begins to develop arguments about the utility of comic drama for boys, arguments only fully articulated elsewhere much later in the century.

This performance of *Eunuchus* will produce both pleasure and profit, Nowell promises, quoting and cleverly redeploying Horace's well-worn formula: in this case, profit for the boys, who are doing it for their studies, and pleasure for the audience. He nods again to first-night nerves before such a distinguished audience, quoting Cicero's dictum that 'honour nourishes the arts' (III.19). But this is all preamble to his central polemical subject: certain men who 'contend that this whole question of acting is pernicious to boys, who should be warded far off from all the fables of the poets, as though from the Sirens' rocks (as they say), or from the spells of witches' (III.30-33). Hardly hiding his scorn for these 'infantile' men – 'if they should indeed be called men and not rather sheep' – Nowell praises his audience for resisting these arguments, which after all have a straightforward answer:

By the same argument they would surely be able to prohibit us from reading sacred letters – yes, even the New Testament itself! For there, too, are recorded evil whores, Herod the infanticide, Judas the traitor, Simon the magician, Herodias the little dancing girl, perjurous Ananias, and countless others of this kind. Why do holy men not fear for boys in this case? Yet *these* things, to be sure, are displayed with a view to deterrence, not to imitation. (III.44-52)

Here Nowell follows the lead of Donatus, the fourth-century Roman commentator on Terence, in claiming the virtue of negative example: comedy satirically reveals our flaws so that we can better recognise and avoid them.³⁴ From comedy, the boys learn 'the headlong frenzies of youth, impetuous urges, rash counsels... whores' squalor, gluttony, rapacity', without the dangers of actually experiencing them (III.56-9). Sure enough, it is not long before he voices the famous

commonplace Donatus attributes to Cicero, that comedy is ‘imitatio vitae, speculum consuetudinis, imago veritatis’ (‘the imitation of life, mirror of custom, image of truth’), though again Nowell tweaks the formula: here comedy is ‘humanae vitae spectaculum’, ‘the spectacle of human life’, in which one may discern vices ‘veluti in speculo’, ‘as in a mirror’ (III.54-5, 63). Plainly the Westminster spectators were themselves good enough students to recognise classical quotations without having them identified; the same effect is achieved at the climax of the *Eunuchus* prologue, where Nowell weaves together a sequence of unattributed quotations from Virgil, Cicero, and Ovid, and finally Erasmus. Unlike Donatus, these are not all commonplaces obviously in the scope of his topic. Nowell is showing off his erudition and his audience is equal to it.

Further praise of Terence follows, but the quotations from Cicero underwrite the final manoeuvre of Nowell’s argument: that acting comedies is a practical training for the development of poised young men. Acting benefits comprehension, memory, and enunciation, and girds one for the responsibilities of public speaking, in case ‘something should need to be said or done publicly’ (III.96-100). Drawing on Cicero and Quintilian, Nowell gestures here towards a rich body of rhetorical theory concerned with the practical advantages of a training in the performing arts. Cicero advises students to ‘study actors as well as orators’ for ‘control and training of voice, breathing, and gestures’; Quintilian remarks that performance ‘trains delivery, voice, and memory all at once’.³⁵ In other words, Nowell is building a case from both classical authority and current experience for the deep connection between acting and rhetorical training – rhetorical training which was in essence the point of a grammar school education.³⁶

Here, again, he is in the literary vanguard. ‘Proper action and pronunciation’ were the explicit goal of the Latin play as it was enshrined in Elizabeth’s statutes for Westminster in 1560;

in the same period, Christopher Johnson was preaching the benefits of *actio* at Winchester and William Malim averred in Eton's *Consuetudinarium* that 'acting is a trifling art, yet nothing is more effective in teaching the action of orators and the gesture and motion of the body.'³⁷ Pragmatic arguments also came to the fore in later educational tracts such as Richard Mulcaster's *Positions* (1581) and Charles Hoole's retrospective *A New Discovery of the Old Art of Teaching Schoole* (1660), as well as in the literary quarrel between William Gager and John Reynolds on the propriety of stage-play.³⁸ But for the 1540s, the fullness of Nowell's argument is remarkable, and its radiation outwards through a figure such as Gager, himself an old Westminster, offers a glimpse at the schoolroom origins of what would become mainstays in the defence of the stage. By way of comparison, Sir Thomas Elyot in 1531 offers only a brief nod to 'the voice and gesture of them that can pronounce commedies', and Erasmus's preface to his edition of Terence (1532) speaks at scarcely greater length of 'the improvement of speaking' ('emendate loquendum') which those who encounter the comedies will enjoy.³⁹

The comparison with Erasmus is nonetheless revealing. In *De ratione studii*, the educational manifesto he produced for St Paul's in 1511, Erasmus sets out a formula for the explanation of awkward material:

For example, take a comedy of Terence. Before translating this he [the teacher] should first of all discuss briefly the author's circumstances, his talent, the elegance of his language. Then he should mention how much enjoyment and instruction may be had from reading comedy; next the significance of that form of literature, its origins, the number of types of comedy and its laws. Next he should explain as clearly and concisely as possible the gist of the plot... Finally he should turn to philosophy and

skilfully bring out the moral implication of the poets' stories, or employ them as patterns.⁴⁰

Erasmus's remarks were redeployed almost *verbatim* in many contexts, from Cardinal Wolsey's foundational statutes for Ipswich College to Melanchthon's commentary on Terence, and Nowell's prologues, too, broadly realise Erasmus's blueprint.⁴¹ Terence's talent and elegance of language is most fully described in the prologue to *Adelphoe*; the profit of comedies (including their practical advantages) and the troped behaviour of comic characters are detailed in the prologue to *Eunuchus*. There can be no question, that is, that these ideas are new, even if Nowell voices them with wit and force. But from a literary-critical point of view, the most remarkable quality of Nowell's prologues to Terence is their imaginative development of robust notions of fiction, example, decorum, realism, imagination. The question of fiction and its relationship to reality plainly was not just a concern of wild-eyed poets or scholars in mildewed garrets, but of schoolmasters and governors and pupils and parents. The pragmatic setting of these speeches is testimony to the fact that what we may think of as limited questions of literary theory were, in truth, a matter of state.

The prologue to Seneca's *Hippolytus*, however, offers something quite different. Performance of Terentian comedy was common school practice throughout Europe, everywhere approved, as Erasmus put it, for the purity of its Roman speech and aptness to the minds of boys.⁴² But Senecan tragedy enjoyed no comparable place in the curriculum. The youthful transgressions and conservative resolutions of Terentian comedy, however indelicate,

nonetheless posed less obvious risk to the characters of schoolboys than Seneca's violent plots of filicide, paganism, and worst of all: seduction.

Nowell's fundamental strategy here is again to cite negative example: even the tragedy's most depraved episodes alert the audience to sins they may thereby avoid. In support he adapts another ancient saying from Erasmus's *Adagia*: 'noris et oderis', 'know, and hate' (II.72). In fact, the polar contrasts of the tragedy – spotless Hippolytus and reprobate Phaedra – bring out Nowell's irritation at the perversity of complaints that 'so extreme an example of women's wickedness is being dealt with by us': 'Who, by god, is so insane that he would want to be like an unchaste woman rather than this chastest of youths?' (II.67-71).

This broad defence by negative example is prosecuted here, however, with an unusually detailed parallel to scripture. Far from *Hippolytus* being odious to pious men, it is all the more commendable, since 'this story of Hippolytus scarcely differs from that history of Joseph and Potiphar's wife set out in the sacred books of Genesis' (II.10-15). The parallels are manifold. Joseph, a holy man, resists seduction and is vengefully accused of rape by Potiphar's wife and sent to prison; he is subsequently redeemed from prison, elevated in status, and renamed 'salvator mundi', 'saviour of the world'. Hippolytus, meanwhile, chastest of young men, resists seduction and is vengefully accused of rape by Phaedra and sent to death, before being resurrected by Aesculapius and renamed 'Virbius', derived from 'bis-vir', 'twice a man' (II.18-31). Even the smallest motors of the plot correspond: the proof of Potiphar's wife's accusation is the cloak Joseph leaves behind when he flees, while the proof of Phaedra's is the sword Hippolytus leaves behind when he does (II.22-4, an observation which bears striking similarity to later Aristotelian discussions of the kinds of recognition and proof on which tragedy operates).⁴³ And as Nowell points out, this comparative method can be extended to all kinds of

stories. Prometheus pouring fire into clay to give life to man: this is the creation of man.

Deucalion and the flood: this is Noah. ‘Truly’, Nowell concludes, ‘were the ancient poets called theologians by the ancients’:

Consider, therefore, Hippolytus to be Joseph; Phaedra, Potiphar’s wife; the prison,
death; the king’s friendship, life; ‘Virbius’, the saviour of the world; Aesculapius, God
– that is to say, he *signifies* God. (II.31-51)

A truly comparative approach to scripture is of course out of the question here, and Nowell has already been at pains to distinguish between what we read in scripture ‘as having happened, beyond any doubt, in reality’ (*‘reuera gestum’*), and what is represented in fables ‘*as though* it has happened, in poetic inventions’ (*‘poëticis figmentis... gestum’*) (II.15-17). Nevertheless, the hasty qualification that Aesculapius merely *signifies* God – where the manuscript is a thicket of erasures and corrections (see **fig. 1**) – is a scribal trace of the kind of pressure Nowell is under, following Henry’s *Act for the Advancement of True Religion*, to toe the pious line. Even with a syntactical excuse, ‘Aesculapium deum esse’ is the last thing a headmaster should be saying in the 1540s, let alone one appointed by the Defender of the Faith.

Nowell sketches the parallel between the stories of Hippolytus and Joseph so confidently that it sounds like common knowledge – certainly modern scholars treat it as a natural comparison with a long history – and at first glance, its sources do indeed seem conventional.⁴⁴ Nowell adopts the commonplaces of allegorical apologetics, perhaps following Boccaccio in claiming that many stories (*‘fabulas’*) ‘conceal certain mysteries of sacred truth in their cloaks’, on account of which the ancients called their poets ‘theologians’ (II.34-5, 46-8).⁴⁵ A further clue

is provided by his inclusion of Hippolytus's resurrection as Virbius, since this episode does not appear in Seneca's play, but is rather to be found in versions of the story in Ovid and Virgil, which attracted far more extensive commentary.⁴⁶ The derivation of 'Virbius' from 'bis-vir' is standard in commentators such as Raffaele Regio and Petrus Berchorius (on Ovid) and Servius (on Virgil), as well as in glossaries such as Elyot's *Dictionary* (1538) and Hermannus Torrentinus's *Elucidarius poeticus* (1498), both of which Nowell lists among his books.⁴⁷ Resurrected and renamed, Hippolytus appears as a type of Christ in these commentaries as well as in Dante and Boccaccio.⁴⁸ Equally, long tradition interpreted Hippolytus as a model of chastity. When Gager modified Seneca's play for university performance in 1592, his additions emphasised Hippolytus's chastity, and Sandys's glosses on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* still later summarised the story as 'the chaste youth suffers for another's unchastity'.⁴⁹ Within Nowell's own library, Marco Antonio Sabellico's *Exemplorum libri decem* (1505, with many later editions) included 'Hippolytus castissimus adolescens' among the 'ethnic' (as opposed to Christian) examples of Chastity.⁵⁰

Easy as it was to find classical commentary describing Hippolytus as a type of Christ and as a model of chastity, it was still easier, on the scriptural side, to find Joseph in those roles.⁵¹ Several Church Fathers had explored the parallels, most prominently Ambrose, who wrote an entire book interpreting Joseph as both a figure of Christ and as the 'speculum castitatis' ('mirror of chastity').⁵² Among his own books alone, Nowell would have found 'Joseph, who is himself a type of Christ' in Cyprian; a chapter on 'Joseph figura Christi' in Chrysostom's homilies on Genesis; heavy emphasis on Joseph's chastity in Josephus's *Antiquities of the Jews*; and Potiphar's wife condemned as the very model of fornication by Gregory of Nyssa.⁵³

Yet these sources operate within *either* the scriptural *or* the classical systems.

Extraordinary though it seems that as full a commonplace glossary as Sabellico's did not include Joseph alongside Hippolytus among the examples of chastity, it is nonetheless emblematic of the difficulty of identifying Nowell's sources. What is missing is a single source that bridges the divide, one that elucidates Hippolytus *as a type of Joseph*, or vice-versa.⁵⁴ By 1559, however, the parallel was clear enough for Gaspar Stiblinus to introduce Euripides's *Hippolytus* by comparing the two directly.⁵⁵ What were Stiblinus and Nowell reading?

It is possible that Nowell's source was not a source at all in the strict sense, but the same pedagogical demands that led to a coincident efflorescence of humanist religious drama composed for schools across Europe, and Germany and the Low Countries in particular.⁵⁶ Plays on the themes of Joseph or the Prodigal Son, compact narratives dramatising the entry of innocent youths into the wider world, were especially apt for schoolboys.⁵⁷ The best known Joseph-play in this early period, though not the first, was Cornelius Crocus's *Ioseph*, performed in Amsterdam in 1535 and printed in 1536 to great acclaim: some fifteen or more independent printings issued from Antwerp, Cologne, Paris, Strasbourg, and Augsburg over the next twelve years, and the play was anthologised in both Brylinger's and Oporinus's collections of sacred drama of the 1540s.⁵⁸ But Crocus's play, which follows Joseph from the temptation of Potiphar's wife, through two years' imprisonment, to his release, shows only weak evidence of Senecan influence, if any at all.⁵⁹ The *Joseph* (1544) of Georgius Macropedius, on the contrary, a leading Dutch schoolmaster and neo-Latin playwright, is far more vigorously Senecan. Though he treats mostly the same episodes as Crocus, Macropedius places the emphasis on Joseph as 'defender of chastity' (*castitatis vindex*) by bringing the temptation scene onto the stage, and fleshes out the character of Potiphar's wife more fully, naming her 'Aegla' in clear identification with Seneca's

‘Phaedra’ (both names mean ‘shining’).⁶⁰ Besides following closely the set-pieces of Seneca’s *Hippolytus*, Macropedius makes his debt explicit in Joseph’s soliloquy at the start of the second act:

Deus Abraham, Deus Isaac, Deus Israhel
Quid implicas me miserum in has angustias...
Nec Phaedra enim (si fabulis quid tribuimus)
Tantum molesta suo quidem Hippolito fuit,
Quàm haec me suis gemitibus & blanditijs
Ad impudicitiam illicit.⁶¹

God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Israel, why do you implicate wretched me in this anguish? ... Not even Phaedra (if we can set faith by stories) troubled her Hippolytus as much as this woman, with her sighs and caresses, tempts me into depravity!

Macropedius’s play is not recorded among Nowell’s several booklists in the Brasenose manuscript, and it can by no means be proven that he read it; it is also worth noting that Nowell approaches the parallel from the opposite direction, using scriptural parallels to justify a classical performance, rather than classical models to embroider and fuel a reformed drama. If he did look at a copy of the *Joseph*, it must have been within only a couple of years of its publication. Yet Nowell’s and Macropedius’s ambitions and needs were themselves strikingly parallel. Produced for safe consumption and performance by schoolchildren, Macropedius’s play is subtitled ‘a sacred fable to be read for the cultivation of piety and modesty’ (‘fabula sacra, pietatis & pudicitiae

cultoribus perlegenda’), both project and terms identical to Nowell’s own. More likely than direct influence, I think, is that the strategy of accommodation Nowell adopts here was emergent across Europe precisely at the moment that he mentioned it: that the demands of mapping scriptural plots onto classical forms were in fact generating a nascent formalism. Under the pressure of accommodating classical stories for children, a new generation of reformers was discovering the necessity, methods, and advantages of comparative literature.

Boys feature in all of these plays, and boys performed them. Each in its own way dramatises matters of import to growing boys in school, staging proper or improper relationships between authority-figures and young men, between passions and propriety, between *sententia* and action; in short, staging the daunting confrontation with pubescence. Nowell’s prologues, in turn, are rhetorically tailored to their several targets at once, performing triple-duty as lessons for boys, orations before clerical superiors, and theoretical arguments for the continuing value of a classical literary education before the changing demands of governing bureaucracies. The shorthand rubrics of Nowell’s rough notebook attest this strain: he places ‘b’ and ‘a’ over words when he wants them to be reversed in delivery, leaves notes for himself, litters his drafts with erasures and over-writings. Sometimes he ends a sentence more than once, leaving his options open, or starts one a second time having thought better of the first. Such evidence of second-thought in composition, no less than the vivid immediacy we can reconstruct for their delivery, makes Nowell’s prologues subtle and fascinating texts. A true humanist impresario, he thunders and grovels, mocks and soars, teaches, delights, and perhaps even moves. These are not dogmatic and moralising reductions of literary complexity, but pragmatic speeches with clear aims in mind. They are, in short, admirable and ingenious claims to ‘impact’, and they suggest

that the authorities will accept the rhetoric of piety, as perhaps they always have, as long as they can stay to hear the play.

Note on the Text

In the Latin transcription that follows I present a diplomatic edition of Nowell's manuscript text, with certain exceptions discussed below. In the English translation, however, I have silently effected whatever instructions Nowell left to himself; I believe this represents the text in a state as close as can be to what was actually delivered, while preserving the integrity of the Latin text for scholars. Notes to the Latin are therefore concerned with questions of textual transmission, while notes to the English text are concerned with sources or questions of interpretation.

Words hyphenated or split across lines have been made whole, and contractions expanded in italics. Where Nowell has used superscript 'a' and 'b' I have reproduced them in superscript.

On several occasions Nowell uses an asterisk or other sign to insert a longer passage recorded nearby, at the foot of the page or on a contiguous leaf. In these cases I have carried out Nowell's instructions, indicating such passages in the notes to the Latin text. On a couple of occasions, notably the entire final folio, Nowell continues one of these parenthetical insertions so far that it begins to overlap with and perhaps even take precedence over what he has written in the 'main' text; the parenthetical passage in these cases could be considered an authorial revision, supplying a different ending from the original. Yet the original remains undeleted, leaving it unclear where the parenthesis was intended to stop and the main text to pick up again.

In such cases I have preserved and redistributed the text according to Nowell's instructions, and proposed excision of overlapping sections.

I have used the following conventional abbreviations:

- * one illegible character
- \ / Nowell's interlinear insertion
- ~~text~~ Nowell's strike-through
- [] My proposed insertion
- † † My proposed excision

¹ All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated. Abbreviations:

PL = J.-P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologia Latina*, 217 vols. (Paris, 1844-1865)

PG = J.-P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologia Graeca*, 161 vols. (Paris, 1857-1866)

BC31 = Oxford, Bodleian Library, Brasenose College 31, cited in the text by folio number.

Quotations from the prologues, however, are keyed to the edition supplied here, by prologue and line number (e.g. I.26 = prologue I, line 26).

² In general on Nowell see Stanford Lehmberg, 'Nowell, Alexander (c.1516/17-1602), dean of St Paul's', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004; online), with important exceptions noted below, note 14. On Nowell's Greek teaching see Micha Lazarus, 'Greek Literacy in Sixteenth-century England', *Renaissance Studies* 29.3 (2015), 433-58: 453-4. As angler: Isaak Walton, *The Compleat Angler or the Contemplative Man's Recreation* (London, 1653), 31-2. On beer: Thomas Fuller, *The History of the Worthies of England* (London, 1662), 115.

³ The manuscript measures about 215 x 153 mm, and is much feathered and generally in poor condition. Original leaves bear a watermark featuring a hand/glove initialled 'PB' on the cuff,

with a five-pointed star/flower extending from the middle finger; it is similar to Gravell watermarks HND.059.1, HND.019.1, HND.043.1, HND.041.1, though identical to none of them. This design was in use across Europe from the 1520s to at least the 1560s (HND.093.1, initialled 'RB' and used 1525, is also very close), and is too common to narrow further the range of possible manufacturers. Binding is discussed below.

⁴ John R. Elliot *et al.* (eds.), *Records of Early English Drama: Oxford* (Toronto, 2004), vol. 2, 634.

⁵ *Catalogue of the Manuscript Library of the Late Dawson Turner... sold by auction... on Monday, June 6, 1859* (London, 1859), no. 353; Madan's manuscript notes, dated 2 Nov. 1892, are contained in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rare Books & Manuscripts Reading Room, R. Ref. 779, for a transcription of which I am grateful to Bruce Barker-Benfield.

⁶ A succinct account can be found in Lawrence E. Tanner, *Westminster School*, 2nd edn (London, 1951), 97-104.

⁷ Alexander Nowell, *A Confutation, As Wel of M. Dormans Last Boke Entituled a Disproufe, &c.* (London, 1567), sig. F.ii.^r; John Strype, *Annals of the Reformation*, vol. 1 (London, 1725), 206; T. H. Vail Motter, *The School Drama in England* (London, 1929), 225 (my emphasis); cf. John Sargeaunt, *Annals of Westminster School* (London, 1898), 4-5.

⁸ Tanner, *Westminster School*, 14; T. W. Baldwin, *William Shakspeare's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke* (Urbana, 1944), 171-9.

⁹ Baldwin, *Small Latine*, 177.

¹⁰ Bruce R. Smith, *Ancient Scripts & Modern Experience on the English Stage, 1500-1700* (Princeton, 1988), 141-7, 199-211; much cited thereafter, e.g. in Robert S. Miola, *Shakespeare and Classical Tragedy* (Oxford, 1992), 13, and *Shakespeare and Classical Comedy* (Oxford, 1994), 4; Jonathan Walker and Paul D. Streufert (eds.), *Early Modern Academic Drama* (Farnham, 2008), 4; Richard Rowland, *Thomas Heywood's Theatre: 1599-1639* (Farnham, 2010), 162.

¹¹ Smith, *Ancient Scripts*, 215, 146, 202. This view of Nowell's prologues persists; see, for example, Elizabeth Sandis, 'Palimpsestuous Phaedra: William Gager's Additions to Seneca's Tragedy for his 1592 Production at Christ Church, Oxford', in T. F. Earle and Catarina Fouto (eds.), *The Reinvention of Theatre in Sixteenth-Century Europe: Traditions, Texts and Performance* (Oxford, 2015), 141-59: 149.

¹² Recent scholarship is surveyed in Elizabeth Sandis and Sarah Knight, 'Latin Drama, Religion and Politics in Early Modern Europe', *Renaissance Studies* 30.4 (2016), 495-504.

¹³ See C. S. Knighton, *Collegiate Foundations, 1540 to 1570, with special reference to St Peter in Westminster* (Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1975), 263-8. Most sources, including the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, still take 1543 to be the date of Nowell's appointment. As Knighton noticed, however, the accounts kept by John Carleton, Crown

Receiver for Westminster record payments to John Adams as headmaster for the quarter ending Lady Day (i.e. 25 March) 1541, and to Nowell thereafter (London, National Archives, LR 2/111, ff.56-76).

14 'de invisendo hac aestate patria, mutata mihi *omnia*. \Miraris quid acciderit noui/ praefectus sum ludo literario quem satis magnificum instituit Westminsterij illustrissimus Rex.'

15 'nam saeuissimo capitis cruciatu diutiuscule ^{iam} vexatus fui isque morbus frequentius summo cum dolore recurrens ita aurium mihi vsum, et oculorum aciem hebetavit.' There is disagreement over the circumstances of this petition. On the premise that it was submitted and granted, Baldwin (*Small Latine*, vol. 1, 174-5) concludes that Nowell sought dismissal from the position of schoolmaster in the royal household, whence he was removed to Westminster; Tanner, however, on the same premise, believes it to be a letter to Queen Mary resigning from Westminster in 1555 (*Westminster School*, 14). Tanner's interpretation can be ruled out, since Nowell refers unambiguously to his education of 'those by whose authority and prudence, after your majesty and the most illustrious Prince Edward [post tuam maiestatem et illustrissimum principem Eduardum], this country may in time be governed' (f.24^v). Rather than conjecture a prior position for Nowell otherwise unrecorded, however, I think it at least as likely that the letter may not have been sent; perhaps Nowell got better.

16 'Eduard[us] est qui nunc scepra britanna tenet.'

17 Not 1561, as claimed by Elliot *et al.* (eds.), *REED: Oxford*, vol. 2, 634, a date which derives from the handwritten contents prefacing the volume. Identifying Nowell's shorthand 'M. B. R.' as 'my brother Robert', the (anonymous) author remarks that the first notice of Robert known to Nowell's biographer was his appointment as Attorney General to the Court of Wards in 1561. The date is then repeated in Falconer Madan's handwritten description of the manuscript in the Bodleian, but there is no reason to assume that Nowell's loans of money and books to his brother commenced with Robert's appointment - quite the opposite, since in 1561 we can for the first time be sure that Nowell's little brother had a job. Christopherson's death in 1558 is therefore the latest date in the manuscript of which we can be certain.

18 Baldwin, *Small Latine*, vol. 1, 177.

19 The form in which Nowell possessed the leaves of the manuscript before they received their modern boards cannot be determined. Some folios (including those containing the prologues) obviously belong together, since the accounts and letters they bear are continuous, but it is elsewhere obvious that the volume has been rebound: a letter to Christopherson on f.36, for example, is back-to-front. There are one or two codicological data: folios 38-47 constitute one gathering of five bifolia, and folios 48-9 form another, bound to two page stubs. But among ff.15-37 (which include the prologues reproduced here) further stubs occur, watermarks bisected by the gutter cannot be reconstituted into logical sequence, and the manuscript is too damaged to afford any basis for collation.

²⁰ I do not know what has led Peter Brown to believe that ‘we do not know whether the performances ever took place’ (‘The Eunuch Castrated’, 25; cf. his ‘Plautus and Terence in England’, in Earle and Fouto (eds.), *The Reinvention of Theatre*, 275n7). The prologues themselves provide more generous evidence than we have for a great many historical performances. Further assurance may be given by Nowell’s inscription of ‘dixi’ at the end of the first two prologues; this may have been inserted *post hoc* as a stamp of delivery, although as such it could also have become conventional. There can be no certainty here, but I am most grateful to Richard Serjeantson for informing me that terminal ‘dixi’ is more common among seventeenth-century student orations that specify a time and place of delivery than among more abstract discussions.

²¹ J. B. Oldham, *A History of Shrewsbury School, 1552-1952* (Oxford, 1952), 6, and Margaret Rogerson, ‘Provincial Schoolmasters and Early English Drama’, *Leeds Studies in English* 29 (1998), 315-32: 323-4.

²² On the last, uncertain decade of Henry’s reign see Alec Ryrie, *The Gospel and Henry VIII: Evangelicals in the Early English Reformation* (Cambridge, 2003).

²³ See Knighton, *Collegiate Foundations*, Appendices 2 and 3, for details of Westminster students at Trinity and Christ Church and of university scholarships supported by Westminster’s foundation. Westminster also initially supported the Regius professorships attached to Trinity and Christ Church: see F. D. Logan, ‘The Origins of the So-Called Regius Professorships’, in Derek Baker (ed.), *Renaissance and Renewal in Christian History* (Oxford, 1977), 271-8. Later scholarly commerce is recorded in G. F. Russell Barker and Alan H. Stenning (eds.), *The Record of Old Westminsters*, 2 vols. (London, 1928).

²⁴ Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin (eds.), *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, vol. 1 (New Haven, London, 1964), 301-2 (22 July 1541).

²⁵ 34/35 Henry VIII (1542-1543), c. 1, §1, §7, in *Statutes of the Realm*, vol. 3 (London, 1817), 894-5. See Stanford Lehmberg, *The Later Parliaments of Henry VIII, 1536-1547* (Cambridge, 1977), 184-8.

²⁶ Ryrie, *The Gospel and Henry VIII*, 157-60 (quoted on 159).

²⁷ BC31, f.24^v. See Knighton, *Collegiate Foundations*, 32-3, on Westminster’s close administration by the court, unique among the new cathedrals.

²⁸ E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1923), 69-73; Motter, *School Drama*, 6-8; Teller’s Rolls of the Exchequer (London, National Archives, E405/87, roll 11, dated Mich. 5 Hen. VIII, i.e. winter 1513), for a payment of 20 s. ‘to the boy bishop of St Nicholas of St Stephen’s Chapel in the palace of Westminster, as a reward by the annual custom’. I am indebted to Paul Cavill for this last reference and to David Waddilove for help interpreting it.

²⁹ Knighton, *Collegiate Foundations*, 251.

³⁰ Knighton, *Collegiate Foundations*, 92-3.

³¹ Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 118, f.233^r; cf. Motter, *School Drama*, 50, on Malim. See Sandis and Knight, 'Latin Drama', 498, on the 'heightened official scrutiny' often given such plays, and Brown, 'The Eunuch Castrated', on the elite audience the Westminster Play continued to attract. Provincial evidence is amassed in Rogerson, 'Provincial Schoolmasters', and London institutions treated exhaustively in Harold N. Hillebrand, *The Child Actors: A Chapter in Elizabethan Stage History* (Urbana, IL, 1926).

³² Nowell remarks that next to their 'barbarous forms of speaking', Terence comes across as 'the very law of Latin speech'; the likely implication is that these *recentiores fabulae* were original, presumably now lost, neo-Latin interludes or comic compositions, perhaps of the kind the Sub-Almoner was awarded sixteen pence to write in 1521. Nevertheless, a tantalising entry on f.45^r reads: 'Memorandum to remembre huntres | matter off oxford. the | paynters matter | my play in Englishe' (noted in *REED: Oxford*, vol. 1, 83).

³³ Jeff Dolven reads deeply into this counterpoint between humanist teaching and learning in *Scenes of Instruction in Renaissance Romance* (Chicago, 2007).

³⁴ In Alex Preminger, O. B. Hardison, and Kevin Kerrane (eds.), *Classical and Medieval Literary Criticism: Translations and Interpretations* (New York, 1974), 299-309. On Terence and his commentaries in England see Howard B. Norland, *Drama in Early Tudor Britain, 1485-1558* (Lincoln, NE, 1995), 66-9.

³⁵ Cicero, *De oratore* I.148-57; Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* I.11.1-15.

³⁶ Renewed attention has been paid to the social and intellectual formations of the humanist schoolroom since Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine's *From Humanism to the Humanities* (Cambridge, MA, 1986), although studies of English schooling gather, with the evidence, in the later sixteenth century. Important contributions include: Richard Halpern, *The Poetics of Primitive Accumulation: English Renaissance Culture and the Genealogy of Capital* (Ithaca, NY, 1991); Rebecca W. Bushnell, *A Culture of Teaching: Early Modern Humanism in Theory and Practice* (Ithaca, NY, 1996); Colin Burrow, 'Shakespeare and Humanistic Culture', in Charles Martindale and A. B. Taylor (eds.), *Shakespeare and the Classics* (Cambridge, 2004), 9-28; Dolven, *Scenes of Instruction*; Lynn Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, Emotion* (Philadelphia, 2012); William P. Weaver, *Untutored Lines: The Making of the English Epyllion* (Edinburgh, 2012). Older but still foundational are Walter J. Ong, 'Latin Language Study as a Renaissance Puberty Rite', *Studies in Philology* 56.2 (1959), 103-24; and Baldwin, *Small Latine*.

³⁷ Westminster: Arthur F. Leach, *Educational Charters and Documents, 598 to 1909* (Cambridge, 1911), 518-19. Johnson: Baldwin, *Small Latine*, vol. 1, 328. Malim: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 118, f.233^r: 'Histrionum leuis ars est, ad actionem tamen oratorum, et gestum motumue corporis decentem, tantopere facit, ut nihil magis'.

³⁸ See Ursula Potter, 'Performing Arts in the Tudor Classroom', in Lloyd Edward Kermode *et al.* (eds.), *Tudor Drama Before Shakespeare, 1485-1590* (New York, 2004), 143-65; Enterline,

Shakespeare's Schoolroom, 38-48. Gager's remarks are presented in Karl Young, 'William Gager's Defense of the Academic Stage', *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters* 18.2 (1916), 593-638: 614.

³⁹ Sir Thomas Elyot, *The Boke Named The Governour* (London, 1531), f.57^v; Erasmus, preface to *P. Terentii comoedias, una cum scholiis ex Donati, Asperi, et Cornuti* (Basel, 1532), sig. a2^v.

⁴⁰ Erasmus, *Collected Works of Erasmus*, vol. 24, ed. Craig R. Thompson (Toronto, 1978), 682-3. Erasmus's wider views are discussed in Norland, *Drama in Early Tudor Britain*, 84-94, and Jan Bloemendal, 'Erasmus and Comedy between the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period: An Exploration', in Dirk Sacré and Jan Papy (eds.), *Syntagmatia: Essays on Neo-Latin Literature*, Supplementa Humanistica Lovaniensia XXVI (Leuven, 2009), 179-86.

⁴¹ For the English context, see Ursula Potter, "'No Terence Phrase: His Tyme and Myne are Twaine': Erasmus, Terence, and Censorship in the Tudor Classroom", in Juanita Feros Ruys *et al.* (eds.), *The Classics in the Medieval and Renaissance Classroom* (Turnhout, 2013), 365-89; Ágnes Juhász-Ormsby, 'Dramatic Texts in the Tudor Curriculum: John Palsgrave and the Henrician Educational Reforms', *Renaissance Studies* 30.4 (2016), 526-41. On Wolsey, see Baldwin, *Small Latine*, vol. 1, 123-6; on Melanchthon, Baldwin, *Shakspeare's Five-Act Structure* (Urbana, 1947), 173-81.

⁴² Erasmus, *P. Terentii comoedias*, sig. a2^v: 'Non ex alio scriptore melius discitur Romani sermonis puritas, nec est alius lectu iucundior, aut puerorum ingenijs accommodatior.' For a brief overview of Terence's popularity in the period, see Jan Bloemendal, 'In the Shadow of Donatus: Observations on Terence and Some of His Early Modern Commentators', in Karl Enenkel and Henk Nellen (eds.), *Neo-Latin Commentaries and the Management of Knowledge in the Late Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period (1400-1700)* (Leuven, 2013), 295-323.

⁴³ See e.g. Antonio Riccoboni, 'Quomodo ars poetica sit pars logicae', in Riccoboni (ed.), *Aristotelis Ars rhetorica... Ars poetica* (Venice, 1579), 375-83, drawing on *Poetics* 16. This was standard iconography for Joseph, and furnishes the oldest purported parallel between the two stories, a sixth-century engraved silver dish: see George M. A. Hanfmann, 'The Continuity of Classical Art', in Kurt Weitzmann (ed.), *Age of Spirituality* (New York, 1980), 75-99: 84.

⁴⁴ H. David Brumble, *Classical Myths and Legends in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (London, 1998), 170-71; John D. Yohannan, *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife in World Literature* (New York, 1968), 16-20, 151-9; Jean Lebeau, *Salvator mundi: l'exemple de Joseph dans le théâtre allemand au XVIe siècle* (Nieuwkoop, 1977), 290-97.

⁴⁵ See Boccaccio, *De Genealogia deorum*, 15.8 on 'mysteria' and 'integumenta', and 14.8 on poets as theologians. For further examples see Peter Dronke, *Fabula* (Leiden, 1974), 47-55; this long tradition survived in Reformation plays contemporary to Nowell's productions, e.g. Guilelmus Gnapheus, *Acolastus*, tr. John Palsgrave (London, 1540), sig. B: 'Iudicra actiuncula | Cuius sub inuolucro habes mysterion' ('... our play, under whose wrappynge in, thou hast a mysterie').

⁴⁶ Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 15.479-546; Virgil, *Aeneid* 7.761-82. See Miola, *Shakespeare and Classical Tragedy*, 4: ‘As sources in the Renaissance, Ovid and Seneca run routes parallel, identical, contiguous, and intersecting’.

⁴⁷ Ovid, *P. Ouidii Metamorphosis*, comm. Regius (Venice, 1493), sig. u; Ovid, *Metamorphosis ovidiana* comm. Berchorius (Paris, 1509), f.xci^v; Virgil, *Opera*, comm. Servius, Donatus, Landinus (Florence, 1487/88), 174^v. Thomas Elyot, *The Dictionary of Syr Thomas Eliot Knyght* (London, 1538), s.v. ‘Virbius’; cf. BC31, f.39^v, ‘elyottes dyctionary’. Hermannus Torrentinus, *Elucidarius poeticus* (Deventer, 1498), s.v. ‘Hippolytus’; cf. BC31, f.38^r, ‘elucidarius poeticus’ also listed on ff.44^v, 47^r.

⁴⁸ Dante, *Paradiso* 17.46-8; Boccaccio, *Eclogues* 11.210-11; for further examples see Brumble, *Classical Myths*, 170-71, and James Nohnberg, *The Analogy of the Faerie Queene* (Princeton, 1976), 172-5 and 270n461.

⁴⁹ J. W. Binns, ‘William Gager’s Additions to Seneca’s *Hippolytus*’, *Studies in the Renaissance* 17 (1970), 153-91; George Sandys, *Ovid’s Metamorphosis Englished* (Oxford, 1632), 523.

⁵⁰ Marco Antonio Sabellico, *Exemplorum libri decem ordine elegantia et utilitate praestantissimi* (Strasbourg, 1511), V.vi, ‘De castitate’; cf. BC31, f.42^r, ‘exempla sabellici’, also listed on ff.44^v, 47^r.

⁵¹ In addition to the sources below, see David Jeffrey, *A Dictionary of the Biblical Tradition in English Literature* (Grand Rapids, 1992), 415.

⁵² Ambrose, *De Joseph patriarcha*, *PL* vol. 14, 641A-642A.

⁵³ Cyprian, *Adversus Judaeos*, *PL* vol. 4, 689A (‘Joseph, qui et ipse fuit typus Christi’); cf. BC31, f.44^v, ‘cypriani opera’, also listed on f.47^r. Chrysostom, *Homiliae in Genesin*, LXI, *PG* vol. 54, 528; cf. BC31, f.44^v, ‘Chrisost[om]i genesin’. Josephus, *Antiquities* II.4; cf. BC31, f.44^v, ‘Josephus de anti juda.’. Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra fornicarios*, *PG* vol. 46, 493D-496A; cf. BC31, f.41^v, ‘gregorius nissenus’, also listed on f.44^v.

⁵⁴ A very obscure passage in Alan of Lille’s *Anticlaudianus* 7.110-17, as suggested by Brumble, *Classical Myths*, doesn’t seem a likely source, and it is not clear that Alan is not referring to Joseph, husband of Mary. In using the terms ‘type’ and ‘figure’ loosely here I am both indebted to the expert advice of Vladimir Brljak, and guilty of transgressing it; see his ‘The Satanic ‘or’: Milton and Protestant Anti-Allegorism’, *The Review of English Studies* 66.275 (2015), 403-22.

⁵⁵ Gaspar Stiblinus (ed.), *Euripides poeta tragicorum princeps...* (Basel, 1562), 203 (preface to *Hippolytus*): ‘Hippolytus innocentiae & castitatis insigne praebet exemplum: quae aliquoties malorum hominum libidine in discrimen uocantur, ita tamen ut fatigentur, non extinguantur. Sic castus Iosephus in Aegypto, impudicae mulieris calumnia ualde quidem periclitatus est, sed tandem post afflictiones & carceres eo clarior emicuit.’ For further discussion see Jan Bloemendal, ‘Central and Eastern-European Countries’, in Bloemendal and Howard B. Norland

(eds.), *Neo-Latin Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden, Boston, 2013), 634-56: 645-8.

⁵⁶ In addition to individual works cited below, see James A. Parente, *Religious Drama and the Humanist Tradition: Christian Theater in Germany and in the Netherlands, 1500-1680* (Leiden, New York, 1987); Bloemendal and Norland, eds., *Neo-Latin Drama*; and in general Lebeau, *Salvator mundi*.

⁵⁷ Lebeau in particular notes their narrative economy: ‘Nous sommes ici en présence d’un véritable petit roman dont l’action, ramassée en quelques versets, frappe par sa densité et sa logique’ (*Salvator mundi*, 287). See further Paul F. Casey, ‘Children and Images of Childhood in German Biblical Drama of the Sixteenth Century’ in Thomas Kerth and George C. Schoolfield (eds.), *Life’s Golden Tree: Essays in German Literature from the Renaissance to Rilke* (Columbia, 1996), 1-14.

⁵⁸ Cornelius Crocus, *Comoedia sacra, cui titulus Ioseph* (Antwerp, 1535); anthologised in Nicolaus Brylinger (ed.), *Comoediae ac tragoediae aliquot ex Nouo et Vetere Testamento desumptae* (Basel, 1540), and Johannes Oporinus (ed.), *Dramata sacra: Comoediae atque tragoediae aliquot e Vetere Testamento desumptae* (Basel, 1547). Subsequent editions are discussed in Marijke Spies, ‘A Chaste Joseph for Schoolboys: On the Editions of Cornelius Crocus’ *sancta comoedia Ioseph* (1536-1548)’, in Koen Goudriaan *et al.* (eds.), *Education and Learning in the Netherlands, 1400-1600* (Leiden, Boston, 2004), 223-33. See also Emily Kearns, ‘Pagan Wisdom, Christian Revelation: Two Latin Biblical Plays’, *Humanistica Lovaniensia* 36 (1987), 212-38.

⁵⁹ Alexander von Weilen, *Der ägyptische Joseph im Drama des XVI. Jahrhunderts* (Vienna, 1887), 29-30; Wilhelm Creizenach, *Geschichte des Neueren Dramas* (Halle A.S., 1918), vol. 2, 106-7; Paul Stachel, *Seneca und das deutsche Renaissancedrama* (Berlin, 1907), 38-9; Thomas W. Best, *Macropedius* (New York, 1972), 136-51; Lebeau, *Salvator mundi*, 312.

⁶⁰ The correspondences between Aegla and Phaedra, and between Macropedius’s and Seneca’s plays in general, are traced point for point by Lebeau, *Salvator mundi*, 313-24. Humanist adaptations often signalled their literary affiliations and ambitions through the names they introduced for Potiphar’s wife, anonymous in the biblical account; see Bernhard Lang, *Joseph in Egypt: A Cultural Icon from Grotius to Goethe* (New Haven, CT, 2009), 46-50, for further examples.

⁶¹ Georgius Macropedius, *Iosephus Macropedii, fabula sacra, pietatis & pudicitiae cultoribus perlegenda* (Antwerp, 1544), II.i (sig. B).

[Note to printer: marginal line numbers at 5 line intervals will need to run alongside the Latin texts once they are typeset. The numbers here, which I expect to change, are just an example.]

I. Prologue to Terence, *Adelphoe*

[f.26^r] In terentij adelphous

Inter caeteras terentij comoedias \viri eximij/ non postremas te[netur] haec quam nunc
agemus adelphoi. multum enim in ea ar[ti]ficium, sententiae plurimae, et graues. exempla ad
vitam vtilia non pauca, hominum vero diuersa ingenia, mores inter se pugnantes, studia
5 contraria, orationes, ac loquendi formae dissidentes, adeo graepice depinguntur, ut qui paulo
attentius animum aduertant, plane diuinam quandam in hoc poëta vim perspiciant. qui ita
describit omnia, ita decorum illud (quod greci τὸ πρεπον vocant) obseruat, ut non fingi ista
sed fieri videri possint. nam de sermonis elegantia, puritate, proprietate quid attinet dicere,
quae (veluti peculiares quaedam dotes) ita huic semper poëtae adsunt, ut cum alijs omnibus
10 dotibus, alios omnes poëtas longe vincat, hiisce autem (quas modo memoravi) etiam seipso
superi[o]r sit. iam vero licere nobis id est pueris, imo ex vsu etiam maxime esse. ut in agendis
nos exerceamus comoedijs, et vobis abunde (qua estis prudentia[]) persuasum credimus, et
nobis hac de re satis superque superiori anno dictum est, ut supervacaneum plane sit iterum
de eisdem apud vos praecipue ago quibus vel ex hoc intelligimus hanc puerilam [f.26^v]
15 exer[citat]ionem non displicere vel ex hoc intelligimus, quod et [**]anno superiori gregem
nostrum singulari audistis, spectastisque candore, et nunc quoque \etiam/ frequentes adestis.
nam taceo a quibusdam \etiam/ vestrum honorarijs nos muneribus invitatos, quo alacriores in
hijs literaris ludicris essemus. quanquam, quae per deum immortalem maior potest esse \nobis
fax/ addi potest. quam hic vester conspectus, haec praesentia vestra, oculi, auresque vestrae
20 addunt. nam si vultis cognoscere quod munus, quas ambiamus a vobis pecunias, dicam, et
vere dicam vobis placere et approbari cupimus. vobis inquam quos illa vere regia prudentia

nobis *praeceptoribusque* nostris *praefecit*. *vestram* benevolentiam si consecuti fuerimus.

nostri voti *summam* habemus. sed iam argumentum accipite. duos cum et[*] cum vero sint in

hac comoedia seniles *personae* tres, *difficillimumque* sit pueris seniles partes agere hic ut et

25 in alijs *omnibus* ad *vestram* aequitatem *veniamque* confugimus, *quam* vel ob hoc nobis

impetrabilem. *confidimus*, *quod* dum latinae linguae elegantiam ex purissimis terentij fontibus

\magis/ cupide *quam* caute haurire conamur, *quaedam* vel absurda tentauimus vel supra vires

agressi sumus. dixi.

46-51 *confidimus ... dixi*] inserted from the bottom of f.26^v, co-ordinated with an 'X'.

On Terence's *Adelphoe*

Not least among the comedies of Terence, that exceptional man, is this, the *Adelphoe*, which we shall now perform. For there is much artifice in it, many good and weighty maxims, no few useful examples for life; and also diverse dispositions of men, contending customs, opposing pursuits, different speeches and ways of speaking, all depicted so graphically that those who pay a little more attention clearly perceive a certain divine force in this poet. He describes all these things so well, he observes that *decorum* (which the Greeks call τὸ πρεπον) so well, that they may seem not imagined, but real. For what need is there to speak about elegance, purity, propriety of speech, which, as though they are gifts unique to him, are always so evident in this poet that, even though he far outstrips all other poets in all other gifts as well, nevertheless in these (which I have just mentioned) he is in a class of his own.

We believe that you (how prudent you are!) are quite convinced of the fact that it is allowed to us, that is, us boys – nay rather, that it is very *profitable* for us – to cultivate ourselves in performing comedies. Enough and more than enough was said about this by us last year, so that it would clearly be redundant for me to go over the same things again, especially among *you*, to whom we understand this childish exercise is not displeasing, if only for the reason that just last year you looked on and gave ear to our company with remarkable kindness, and now, again, you are attending in throngs.

Now, I won't mention the fact that we have been summoned by certain among you to these honorary duties, so that we may be the more courageous in these literary sports. And yet: what greater stimulus, by immortal god, could be given us, than that which this, your spectatorship, this, your presence, your eyes and ears, provide? For if you want to know what service and what rewards we solicit from you, I will say, and I will say truly: we desire to please and be approved by you – by you, I say, whom that truly royal prudence has placed in

charge of us and our teachers. If we were to gain your benevolence, we would attain the pinnacle of our desire.

But now, hear the play. Since there are two... Since, actually, there are three old characters in this comedy,¹ and it is very difficult for boys to act old parts, in this as in all other matters we appeal to your fairness and indulgence, which we are confident is easy for us to obtain, for this reason: that the moment that we endeavour to draw the elegance of the Latin tongue from the purest fonts of Terence more zealously than cautiously, either we have attempted something absurd, or undertaken something beyond our power. I have spoken.

II. Prologue to Seneca, *Hippolytus*

[f.27^r] In Senecae hypolitum

Senecae tragici poëtae hypolitum spectatores candidissimi \apud vos/ acturi, non formidamus
hoc praefari. ut \ex/ inter tragicos omnes latinos non solum tantum primus, sed propemodum
etiam solus, vel fabij iudicio, dignus \est/ qui legatur †est† hic seneca, ita inter omnes huius
5 tragedias longe primas obtinet, haec quam sumus representaturi hypolitum. \fabula/ accedit
ad eius, cum apud alios omnes, tum apud vos praecipue, commo utpote sacrarum literarum
studiosos, a commendationem etiam hoc accedit. quod non a iosephi et pitipharis vxoris
historia in sacris genesios libris prodita non procul haec hypoliti fabula non procul abludit. et
quod illic citra omnem controuersiam reuera gestum legitur. hic poëticis figmentis tanquam
10 gestum adumbratur. illic vir sanctus impudiciae insimulatus ab importuna muliere quia malus
esse nolebat in carcerem malorum domicilium traditur. hic iuuenis pudicus intemperijs
nouerca[e] exagitatus, e vita pellitur \fugatur/. illa detractam fugienti \iuueni/ paenulam ut
cogitati sceleris argumentum ostentat. haec relictum ab hipolite itidem fugienti gladium. \ut/
ab eo vim sibi intentante stricto arguit. ille e carcere †\a duobus/† ad regiam amicitiam
15 euocatus, mutato a pharaone nomine lingua aegyptijs gentili, saluator mundi dicitur
nuncupatur. hic vitae ab aescu\la/pi[o] redditas, id est deo, redditus, nouo cognomento
tanquam facti indice, Virbius est dictus, quasi bis virum dicas. Videar certe ista [f.27^v]
confidentius inter se componere nisi maximis (etiam nostrae religionis.) viris persuasum
fuerit, aut nullas aut admodum paucas poëtarum fabulas esse quarum involucris, non aliqua
20 sacrae veritatis mist[e]ria integantur. Nam quid ille plastes prometheus limo in humani
corporis effigiem format[o] \ignem id est/ vitam infundens aliud significare possit quam
admirabilem illam hominis creationem stat in ipso statim genesios initio descriptam. quid
mentita illa deucalionis aetate maris vniuersum orbem terrarum inundatio, quam verum noes

tempore diluuium adumbrat. Sed quid ego in tanta exemplorum copia unam aut alteram
 25 persequor. hoc *genus* sunt et herculis labores, et gigantea in deos rebellio, et orphea atque
 amphiona sequentia saxa. denique poëtarum *omnia*. si excutiantur poenitius hic nimirum
 poëtae veteres theologi a veteribus appellati. hipolitum igitur iosephum putate, phaedram
 putipharis vxorem, carcerem mortem. regis amiticiam vitam. \virbium mundi saluatorem/
 aesculapium deum \esse/. hoc est deum significare. †quod si feceritis ipsismet vobis sacr[am]
 30 historiam representetis.† nunc argumentum accipite. [f.28^r] Quod si feceritis non tam
 spectabitis nos poetica[m] \propha[nam]/ a[gentes] fabulam, quam ipsimet vobis sacram
 representabitis histori[am.] praeterea vero Φædra sibimet ipsi mortem consciscens quid docet
 aliud quam magna et inaudita scelera ad extremum malorum desperationem adigere. Et
 tametsi vesanae mulieris plurima sit hic mentio nunquam tamen ita poterunt quemquam ad
 35 peccandum eius invitare scelera, quam deterrebunt supplicia. \ad cauendum monebunt
 supplicia./ et cum sit hic in iuvene aulico^b, iuvene^a principe, tam eximium pudiciae exemplum
 ut famam, patriam, principatum, vitam denique pudicitiae posthabuerit. †\et i[^]./† quis \per
 deum/ tam est male sanus ut incestae mulieri potius quam casta castissimo iuveni similem se
 esse velit. haec adieci, veritus cui nimium displiceret, mulieris nequitiae tam rarum exemplum
 40 a nobis tractari. in quo quidem ut in caeteris hoc *genus omnibus* veteris meminique dicti.
 noris, et oderis sunt vero in hac tragedia, sententiae ita prudentes sanctae, et propemodum
 christianae, et hae rursum tam multae, ut perpetuae potius, quam frequentes videri possint. ut
 facile paria faciant, male sanis illis et ad odium tantum descriptis furentis foeminae delirijs.
 Iam finem facio, si prius hoc vnum vos admonuero, quaedam nos in hac tragoedia
 45 transilituros, sed ita tamen ne vel series rei gestae interrumpatur^b hiulce^a. [f.28^v] vel [***
 praet]ermittatur cognitu necessarium. Idque hoc com[***]o fecimus, ne praeter actionis
 ineptiam, ipsa etiam prolixitas tedium vobis nauseamque adferat. sed iam argumentum
 accipite.

dixi

22-25 illa ... arguit] inserted from the bottom of the previous folio, f.26^v, co-ordinated by an asterisk and a note reading 'to ye other *preface*'.

65-66 ut famam ... pothabuerit] inserted from the bottom of this folio, f.28^r, co-ordinated by an asterisk.

78-84 Iam finem ... adferat] inserted from the bottom of this folio, f.28^r (to 81: 'vel'), and from the following folio, f.28^v (from '[*praet*]ermittatur'). This passage follows without a break from the lines inserted at 65-66, but has been distributed in this way in the interest of sense.

On Seneca's *Hippolytus*

We who are about to perform the *Hippolytus* of the tragic poet Seneca, kindest spectators, are not afraid to preface it as follows: just as this Seneca, at least in the judgement of Quintilian, is not only the first among all Latin tragedians, but almost the only one worth reading,² so among all his very finest tragedies stands this *Hippolytus*, which we are about to show you.

This play is recommended not only to others, but to you in particular, inasmuch as you are devoted to sacred letters, for this reason: that this story of Hippolytus scarcely differs from the history of Joseph and Potiphar's wife set out in the sacred books of Genesis.³ And what we read there as having happened, beyond any doubt, in reality, is here represented *as though* it has happened, in poetic inventions. *There* a holy man, accused of indecency by a shameless woman, is sent to prison, a house of evils, because he did not wish to be sinful. *Here*, a virtuous boy, harried by a stepmother's intemperances, is driven from life. *That* woman exhibits the cloak stripped away from the youth as he was fleeing as evidence of a premeditated crime. *This* woman argues that the sword likewise left behind by the fleeing Hippolytus is a clear threat of violence towards her. *That* man, summoned from prison into royal favour, his name changed by the Pharaoh into the language of the Egyptians, is named 'saviour of the world'. *This* man, returned to life by Aesculapius (that is a god), was known by a new name, as (so to speak) a sign of the fact: he was called Virbius, as though he were, you might say, 'twice a man' [*bis virum*].

I might seem too daring, perhaps, in placing these stories side by side, were it not for the fact that great men (even those of our own religion) have been convinced that there are no stories of the poets, or very few, which do not conceal certain mysteries of sacred truth in their cloaks.⁴ For what could the sculptor Prometheus signify, pouring life (that is, fire) into

mud which has been shaped into the likeness of a human body, other than the marvellous creation of man, as described right at the very start of Genesis? What could the sea represent, flooding the whole globe of the earth in that feigned age of Deucalion, other than the true flood in the time of Noah? But why proceed case by case, amid such an abundance of examples? Of this kind are the labours of Hercules, and the giants' rebellion against the gods, and the stones following Orpheus and Amphion;⁵ in short, all the works of the poets, if scrutinised more deeply. Truly were the ancient poets called theologians by the ancients.⁶ Consider, therefore, Hippolytus to be Joseph; Phaedra, Potiphar's wife; the prison, death; the king's friendship, life; 'Virbius', the saviour of the world; Aesculapius, God - that is to say, he *signifies* God. For if you do so, you will not so much watch us acting a profane poetic fable, as you will represent to yourselves sacred history.

And besides, what *does* Phaedra teach in bringing her own death upon herself, other than the fact that great and unheard-of crimes impel one towards the extreme desperation of evil? Even if there is much mention here of a mad woman, still there is no chance that her crimes will be more able to entice anyone to sin, than her punishments to deter them [or: to warn people to avoid them].⁷ And since there is here, in the young royal prince, such an outstanding example of chastity that he subordinates fame, fatherland, princehood, and finally his own life, to chastity: who, by god, is so insane that he would want to be like an unchaste woman rather than this chastest of youths?

I raise these questions, fearful that someone may be greatly displeased that so extreme an example of women's wickedness is being treated by us. In which case, as indeed in all other cases of this kind, I recall the words of the ancients: 'know, and hate.'⁸ But in fact there are in this tragedy maxims so prudent, sacred, all but Christian - and so many of these, in turn, that they might seem incessant rather than merely frequent! - that they readily bring

about matching virtues, whereas the insanities and ravings of a madwoman described herein generate only odium.

Now I shall draw to a close, but not before warning you of this one thing: that we will be skipping over certain things in this tragedy, but in such a way, nevertheless, that the sequence of enacted events is not gapingly disjointed, nor anything necessary to be understood, omitted. And we have made this [accommodation], lest – quite apart from the ineptness of the acting – prolixity itself bring you tedium and nausea. But now, hear the play.

I have spoken.

III. Prologue to Terence, *Eunuchus*

[f.29^r] In *Eunuchum* terentij

Si mihi ea dicendi copia ea vis esset \sermonis/ \sp[ectato]/res candi[di]ssimi quam in
cicerone paucisque admodum alijs \omnis aetas/ admiratur nulla tamen oratione consequi
queam. quod gaudeam, quam voluptatem perceperit grex \noster/ ex hoc conspectu vestro
5 perceperit, cum intelligit studia sua, vobis, (taceo dicere quibus viris,) ita cordi curaeque esse,
vt ludicra etiam sua, si paulum sepostis maximis et gravissimis rebus, quae vobis incumbant
paulum sepos[i]tis, spectare non dedignemini. quae, res nihil aliqua magis acres cum primis
stimulos, et veluti faces quasdam quibus generosae indolis spiritus incalescit, iuventutis
animis subdit vnde, incredibilis discendi ardor, et honestae laudis nunquam intermoritur.
10 ambitio nascitur. nam si verum est, vt est profecto verissimum quod volgo dici solet honos
alit artes, quis per deum immortalem maior tribui studijs potest quam, si amplissimi viri, et
rerum maximarum gubernac[u]lis admoti, pue\ri/lium ludicorum prima tyrocinia, praesentia
sua animarint laude \viris praestantissimis/ fouerint. id quod cono quae vestra humanitas eo
nobis gratior \nobis/ acceptiorque multa est. quia non desint etiam hodie homines quidam (si
15 tamen homines illi dicam et non pecudes potius dicendi sint.) quibus nihil pestilens esse
videtur, quicquid non est barbarum quique contendunt, totam hanc agendi rationem pueris
perniciosam [f.29^v] esse, et eos a poëtarum fabulis \omnibus/ tanquam a Syrenaeis [(**]
aiunt) scopulis, aut sagarum incantamentis procul arcendos. capere enim flexiles illos animos,
et in peius semper sequaces viciorum illecebris, potius quam orationis lenocinijs:
20 praestareque linguas illorum minus elegantes, quam mores magis corruptos esse. qui atque
\haec/ tanta detonant autoritate, tanta improbitate passim inculcant, praesertim apud imperitos
(apud quos mirum quam sint facundi, infantissimi homines) ut nonnullos ad haec studia
segniores reddiderint. quibus vestram auctoritatem obuiavisse supra modum gaudemus. quis

enim nescit ea probare vos, quae spectare dignamini / possent certe nobis eadem ratione,
25 sacrarum literarum, atque adeo ipsius novi testamenti lectionem interdicere. Nam et illic
meretrices malae, herodes infanticida \iudas, proditor; Simon, magus:/ herodiades,
psaltatricula: \periurus ananias:/ et hoc genus \alia/ innumera memorantur. cur non hic pueris
metuunt homines sancti? sed ista certum est deterrendi caussa proponi non ad imitationem.
neque alia profecto poëtis mens fuit. quod abunde fabularum exitus declarant /. quanto rectius
30 illi, qui comoediam humanae \vitae/ spectaculum dixere, vnde tibi exempla quae sectere,
quaeque fugias, sumes. Hinc, precipites iuvenum furores \impetus/, inconsulta consilia, et
vere amatores non amores intelligas, hinc, meretricum sordes, ingluuiem, rapacitatem. †ullo†
cum \minori/ periculo, multa cum vtilitate tamenque voluptate mature cognoscas ut vbi noris
[f.30r] perpetuo oderis. hinc palponum blandum, sed pestilen[tium] gnatonissimum, veluti in
35 speculo cernas. hinc hic thras[o]num vanas glorias non sine risu audias. omniaque in
vniuersum tanquam pestifera diligenter vites. iam sententiae variae, salubres, venustae, acres,
ridiculae, etiam, veluti flosculi passim aspersi, mirum, quam iuvent, delectent, rapiant
prosunt. accedit ijs, perpetua et propemodum propria sermonis \orationis/ puritas, simplicitas,
elegantia, quae cum sint, in hoc (cuius nunc eunuchum agemus) poëta eximia omnia. ad
40 reliquas tamen eius dotes collata in tenuiore laudis parte ponenda videri possunt. istis
omnibus si accedat actio, hoc est vita. incredibilem omnibus gratiam addit. †in tenuiore laudis
parte ponenda videri possint.† non ioci hic non crassi, ac ex volgo sumpti, vt apud plautum.
non barbarae loquendi formae, vt in recentioribus fabulis fere omnibus. quas tametsi nos
nonnullas, et aegimus antehac, et exinde \imposterum/ etiam fortasse agemus, non tam illas
45 tamen, nostris comodis, quam aliorum oculis paravimus, vt quae, effuso gestu, ac iocis
crassioribus popularibus quidem sensibus aptiores sunt. at ad linguae cultum, aut nihil
omnino, aut non ita multum faciunt. at terentius \hic/, non tam latinus scriptor, quam ipsa
latini sermonis lex, videri potest. cuius purissimam orationem musae dictarunt, cuius

argumenta, eo artificio, ea venustate, ea dexteritate sunt tractata, vt nihil absolutius, humanum
50 vsquam ingenium excogitavit, hic est, hic est, \viri eximij/, qui vobis, hoc est, doctissimis
pariter, et prudentissimis viris placere, possi[t] hic est, qui nobis, hoc est, scholasticis maxime
prodesse possit. huius nos Eunuchum, comediam omnium facile principem, delegimus. †Nos
vero et in. fa. praecedenti hisque ^{a†} nos vero praeterquam quia ^b omnia intelligemus mellius,
retinebimus fidelius, pronunciabimus rectius ex ^a hoc agendi vsu. discemus etiam, non
55 formidare hominum caetus, si quando quid publice vel dicendum vel agendum sit: quod fabio
non contenendum commodum videtur, alioqui qui subito ex illa scholarum vmbra, in solem
quod aiunt et puluerem prodit, haud aliter attonitus stupet quam qui Iovis ignibus ictus viuit et
est vitae nescius ipse suae. sed video vos expectare argumentum. vos auribus oculis ^b adeste
sed praecipue \et/ animis^a et fauete primum experienti quanda est venia ut est in prouerbio,
60 nemo vero nostrum ante hunc diem in scenam prodijt.

75-96 †in tenuiore ... praecedenti hisque ^{a†}] inserted from the following folio, f.30^v. The intention to do so is
signalled by the overlap with 'in tenuiore...' and 'nos vero...' in the main text; the overlapping sections are
obelised here.

On Terence's *Eunuchus*

If I had that abundance in speaking, kindest spectators, that power of speech which every age admires in Cicero and very few others, nevertheless in no oration would I be able to equal him. For I would be glad if the pleasure our company takes from your spectatorship - although it understands that these are its *studies* - should be so pleasing and so valuable to you (I won't mention what kind of men you are)⁹ that you would not deem it unworthy to watch their jests as well, having placed the most important and serious matters, which press upon you, aside a little. The fact that you are watching applies sharp spurs above all to the minds of the young, like certain torches by which the spirit of a noble character is heated, whence an incredible ardor for learning and ambition for honest praise is born, and never dies out. For if it is true, as what is commonly said is surely most true, that 'honour nourishes the arts',¹⁰ then by god, what greater honour could be added to these studies than if the most distinguished men, situated at the helm of the most important affairs, were to inspire with their presence the first attempts of boys' plays, and favour these outstanding men with praise.

This courtesy of yours, therefore, is that much more pleasing and welcome to us, because there is no lack today of certain men (if they should indeed be called men and not rather sheep) to whom whatever is not barbarous seems to be a plague, and they contend that this whole question of acting is pernicious to boys, who should be warded far off from all the fables of the poets, as though from the Sirens' rocks (as they say), or from the spells of witches; that it captivates their pliant minds, and that they will always for the worse be followers of the enticements of vices, rather than the allures of speech; that their tongues should rather be less elegant, than their customs more corrupt. And they thunder these things with such authority and press the case everywhere so unscrupulously, especially among the ignorant (among whom they are marvellously eloquent, these most infantile men), that they render many people reluctant of these pursuits.

We rejoice beyond measure that your authority has resisted these men. For who does not know that you approve those things which you deem worthy to see? By the same argument they would surely be able to prohibit us from reading sacred letters – yes, even the New Testament itself! For there, too, are recorded evil whores, Herod the infanticide, Judas the traitor, Simon the magician, Herodias the little dancing girl,¹¹ perjurious Ananias,¹² and countless others of this kind. Why do holy men not fear for boys in this case? Yet *these* things, to be sure, are displayed with a view to deterrence, not to imitation. Nor, indeed, was the intention of the poets otherwise, as the conclusions of their stories demonstrate in abundance. How much righter are those who have said that comedy is the spectacle of human life, whence you will select for yourselves which examples to follow, and which to flee. From comedy you may learn the headlong frenzies of youth, impetuous urges, rash counsels, and what in fact is bitterness, not love; from here, whores' squalor, gluttony, rapacity. With less danger, yet with much utility and delight, you may learn this in time, so that as soon as you know it you will hate it forever. Here you may discern, as in a mirror, the charming yet most Gnathonic pestilence of flatterers. Here, you may hear (and not without laughter) the vain glories of Thrastos.¹³ And all these things in general you may diligently avoid like the plague.

Besides, various wholesome, charming, vigorous, and comic maxims are scattered everywhere like little flowers, which marvellously aid, delight, enrapture, and are useful. In addition to these, there is that eternal and all but unique purity of speech, simplicity, and elegance. Even though all of these are present in this remarkable poet (whose *Eunuch* we will now perform), when they are weighed against the rest of his talents it may seem, nevertheless, that they ought to be placed in the slenderer part of praise. Yet if to these is added *action*, that is, life, then an extraordinary grace is imparted to all of them. Here there are no coarse jokes, taken from the vulgar rabble, as in Plautus; no barbarous forms of speaking, as in nearly all recent plays – some of which, even if we have acted them in the

past, and perhaps should act them again in the future, nevertheless we prepare them not so much for our own benefit as for the eyes of others, since their overacting and coarser jokes are frankly more suitable for the senses of common folk, and when it comes to the cultivation of language they achieve either not much or nothing at all; whereas here Terence might seem not so much a Latin writer, as the very law of Latin speech. The Muses have declared the superlative purity of his speech; his plots are discussed for their artifice, their charm, their dexterity, as though human wit has nowhere contrived anything more perfect; ‘This is he, this is he,’¹⁴ excellent men, he who to you – that is, men as greatly learned as you are greatly prudent – may give pleasure, and who to us – that is, scholars – may give great profit. We have chosen his *Eunuch*, the comedy easily the first among them all.

As for us, besides all this, from this experience of acting we will understand better, we will recall more faithfully, we will enunciate more correctly. We will learn, too, not to fear the crowd, if at any time something should need to be said or done publicly: what seems agreeable to Quintilian is not to be challenged, and besides, he who suddenly ‘comes forth from that shadow of the schools into the sun and the sand,’ as they say,¹⁵ ‘hardly wonders, astonished, in any other way than he who, struck by the fires of Jove, lives and is unaware of his own survival.’¹⁶ But I see that you are waiting for the play. Attend with your ears, your eyes, and your minds, and favour ‘the beginner’ with as much ‘indulgence’ as is in the proverb:¹⁷ for not one of us has appeared on stage before this day.

¹ In fact there are at least four: the fathers Demea, Micio, and Hegio are labelled ‘senex’, but Canthara is an old woman (‘anus’) and the widowed ‘matrona’, Sostrata, could well count as ‘old’ to a boy actor. Nowell’s hand becomes briefly irregular here, but since the sentence is

nowhere struck through I have translated as though his self-correction is intentionally scripted.

² Quintilian, *IO* 10.1.125-129. Nowell is exaggerating Quintilian's approval.

³ Gen. 39-43.

⁴ Boccaccio, *De genealogia deorum*, 15.8, is one parallel among many.

⁵ A direct quote from Ovid, *Met.* 11.1-2: 'Carminum dum tali sylvas animosque ferarum | Threicius vates, et saxa sequentia ducit'.

⁶ cf. Boccaccio, *De Genealogia deorum*, 14.8: 'gentiles poetas mythicos esse theologos'.

⁷ There is no indication which of these options Nowell chose.

⁸ Erasmus, *Adagia* 2.5.96 (*CWE* 33, 96): 'Mores amici noveris, non oderis' ('know your friend's weaknesses but hate them not'); 'the point is,' Erasmus explains, 'that certain faults of character in our friends should be overlooked, on the basis that we should understand them and at the same time tolerate them'. But cf. III.61, below: if Nowell is thinking of Erasmus's adage, he has turned it to his own ends.

⁹ Alternatively, 'I won't say to *which* of you'. Either way, Nowell is being coy with his audience.

¹⁰ Cic. *Tusc. disp.* 1.2.4.

¹¹ Smith has 'Herodias the harpist' (*Ancient Texts*, 142), deriving *psaltatricula* from *psalterium*, but harping is neither an attribute of Herodias nor, indeed, a sin; Matthew 14:6 reads 'die autem natalis Herodis saltavit filia Herodiadis in medio et placuit Herodi' ('but on Herod's birthday the daughter of Herodias danced among them and pleased Herod'), and it seems most likely that Nowell slipped a *p* into *saltatrix*, 'dancing-girl'. *Herodiades* is the accusative of *Herodias*, but Nowell is using the Greek filial suffix (cf. *Peleiades* for Achilles), and means to identify Salome, daughter of Herodias and notorious *saltatricula*.

¹² Ananias, husband of Sapphira, was struck down for defrauding the Apostles (Acts 5:1-6).

¹³ Gnatho the parasite and Thraso the boastful soldier are characters in *Eunuch*.

¹⁴ cf. *Aeneid* 6.791: ‘hic vir, hic est’

¹⁵ The metaphor is developed at greater length in Cic. *De orat.* 1.157, but the language here is closer to Cicero’s description of Demetrius Phalereus, *Brut.* 9.37: ‘itaque delectabat magis Atheniensis quam inflammabat. Processerat enim in solem et pulverem, non ut e militari tabernaculo, sed ut e Theophrasti doctissimi hominis umbraculis’ (‘He entertained rather than stirred his countrymen; for he came forth into the heat and dust of action, not from a soldier’s tent, but from the shady retreat of the great philosopher Theophrastus’).

¹⁶ Adapted from Ovid, *Tristia* 1.3.11-12: ‘non aliter stupui, quam qui Iovis ignibus ictus | vivit et est vitae nescius ipse suae’.

¹⁷ Erasmus, *Adagia* 1.9.61 (*CWE* 32, 215): ‘Συγγνώμη προτοπείρῳ, venia primum experienti’ (‘let a beginner off lightly’).